

be negotiated with North Korea. By the 11th hour of the Clinton administration, the United States and North Korea were discussing further proposals that would, indeed, prevent North Korea from developing missiles capable of striking the United States and bring a halt to North Korea's lucrative missile exports.

In my view, at this moment, now, we should still be encouraging progress in those particular areas. We should be particularly encouraging Pyongyang to continue down that path, not sending them a message that may, in fact, make it months later and far more difficult before we can do so. Delaying missile talks will not enhance the security of the United States or of the region about which we care. In fact, delay, coupled at this morning's hearing with Secretary Powell's somewhat lukewarm endorsement of the agreed framework could send a very negative signal about the nature and direction of United States policy toward North Korea.

The Clinton administration, in many people's judgment, may well have moved faster than some believed was prudent. But the reality is that negotiations have begun and proposals are on the table for discussion. Nothing has been agreed upon yet. There is no reason this administration could not pick up where the Clinton administration left off, even as it makes the decision to review and discuss alternative proposals. Nothing will preclude them from ensuring adequate monitoring and verification.

The issue of North Korea's missile capability is fundamental not only to security on the Korean peninsula but also to our own long-term security and also to the debate on national missile defense. The North Korean missile threat has been offered by the Bush administration and others as a major reason why the United States needs to move more rapidly with the National Missile Defense System. Given that, I am somewhat confused by the administration's go-slow approach on the missile talks with Pyongyang. If we can reduce or eliminate the threat posed by North Korea's missile program, not only to us but to others, we are going to be on a very different playing field. We will have greater security, on the one hand, and we will be able to look at other national missile defense options that may be less costly and less damaging to the arms control regime established by the Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty. With all of this in the balance, it seems to me that there is little to lose—and potentially much to gain—by getting back to the table with Pyongyang and seeing where the negotiations go.

It is my hope that this administration will rapidly move to do so.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan is recognized.

SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE LOCKBOX

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I rise this afternoon to strongly support the Conrad amendment that is before us which would create a lockbox for Social Security and for Medicare.

As a member of the Budget Committee, I have watched and listened to the proposals of the administration as they relate not only to the tax cut before us but the spending priorities. I listened on the evening of the State of the Union to a variety of proposals, all of which sounded very good. In fact, in some cases sitting there knowing our fiscal constraints, it sounded too good to be true.

I find as a member of the Budget Committee looking at the details now that, in fact, it was too good to be true, and the budget that has been proposed proposes to use all of the Medicare trust fund and a portion of the Social Security trust fund in order to balance this budget. There is still a question about whether or not it adds up.

If we proceed as this body and the House of Representatives voted last year to protect Social Security and Medicare to keep it out of the revenue stream for spending proposals, if we support the lockbox notion, which I hope we will—again, it passed this body by 60 votes last year, and I am hopeful it will do the same this year—if we pull those dollars out and protect them as the people of the country expect us to do, not only the seniors but the baby boomers who will be retiring in large numbers beginning in about 11 years, and also my son and daughter who are young people, can look forward to the future expecting us to protect those funds. We find that the President's proposal for his tax cut takes up literally the entire discretionary dollars available to us except for Social Security and Medicare of over the next 10 years. That is assuming we believe the projections, and we certainly hope they are true for the dollars that have been projected in surplus.

But we all know, as Chairman Greenspan indicated, that these are educated guesses.

Given the fact that if you protect Social Security and Medicare, the President's tax proposal takes every dollar of discretionary income left, rather than the next 10 years and being able to balance that with some dollars for investments in education, infrastructure, prescription drug coverage for Medicare, and balancing that with an important tax cut for middle-class families, it doesn't add up. The administration has chosen to dip into Medicare and Social Security in order to be able to provide dollars for important investments in the American people's priorities in terms of education and other areas.

If you protect Social Security and Medicare, the dollars are not there for education.

The President has said we are going to say the Medicare trust fund doesn't

exist anymore. We heard in front of the Budget Committee from our new Treasury Secretary, as well as the Director of Management and Budget, that they believe there really isn't a trust fund; that, in fact, there isn't a surplus in Medicare, even though every year we get reports regarding the solvency of the trust fund and the date at which it will become insolvent, and the fact that the date has been growing further into the future because of the good economy.

Now we fear there is, in fact, no trust fund. Those reports, I guess, meant nothing before.

In reality, there is a Medicare trust fund. We know that Part A has been an important part of the solvency of Medicare, and this trust fund is critical in maintaining and protecting the health care benefits for the seniors and future generations in our country.

I urge my colleagues to send a very strong message to the White House and to the American people that we intend to keep the promises of Medicare and Social Security, and to lock away the Medicare trust fund along with every penny of Social Security so that we will keep those as a separate promise and protect them for our seniors, for our families, and for future generations.

Without this lockbox, we will find ourselves in the situation of seeing the budget continue down the road with the full intention of using the entire Medicare trust fund in order to balance the books, and a portion of Social Security in order to balance the books.

That is not in the best interest of the American people. We can do better than that. We can design a budget that protects Social Security and Medicare and strengthens it for the future, provide a real tax cut for middle-class families, small businesses, and family farmers in this country, and also pay down the debt so the interest rates our citizens and businesses are paying for will continue to go down, and at the same time invest in the priority that President Bush has articulated well—and I agree with—which is the question of education and investing in the future for our children.

This budget is about more than numbers. It is about our values as American people. In times when we have choices that we can make because of projected surpluses, the real task for each of us is what will be our priority? What will the choices be when we can make choices?

I strongly hope one of the choices made by this Congress and administration is not to use the entire Medicare trust fund to fund other purposes in the budget; that we will join together on a bipartisan basis, as has been done in the past when Republicans and Democrats joined together to support locking away the Social Security trust fund and the Medicare trust fund so that they are outside the budget stream and are protected for now and the future.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

COMMITTEE RULES AND FUNDING

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I want to take a few minutes now while we wait on other Senators who may want to comment on what I am about to say. But I want to thank the chairmen and the ranking members of the committees who have worked together over the past 6 weeks to get an agreement on the committee rules and the funding and staffing and space arrangements for the Senate committees this year.

Senator DASCHLE and I worked through a very difficult process to get the organization resolution passed back in January. But in some respects that was the easy part, even though that was not easy. It was easier than what the chairmen and ranking members had to go through. Each committee had to deal with how they were going to proceed with the 50-50 division of Members. They had to work on different rules of different committees, different personalities, and different responsibilities.

Most of the committees went through it at a pretty quick pace. Some of them were more difficult and were more complex.

When the time came the beginning of March for us to pass the funding resolution, not all had been done. There were, I guess, two or three committees that still had some serious reservations or disagreements. But for those committees we extended the time without a lot of difficulty. And those committees have continued to work together, and they have reached agreement, one by one.

Then we were down to just one final committee, and they have reached an agreement—Senator HATCH and Senator LEAHY. I know it was not easy for either one of them, but I want to thank all who have been involved for the effort that has been put into this. I think it still bodes well that we can work together through difficult issues in a bipartisan way.

Having said that, we are ready to go now, and we are ready to discharge the Rules Committee and adopt this resolution. I understand there has been an objection to it being done through the discharge mechanism, that they want the Judiciary Committee to act, and then they want the Rules Committee to meet.

I note that it is 10 minutes until 5 on Thursday. Members were told there would not be any further votes. So, once again, I am saying all this and pointing out that, while I am trying very hard, it is still very difficult to get things done without them being complicated. There is no reason why we should not discharge the committee and get this done after all of the good work that is being done. I am going to say, flat out, I suspect there is staff in-

involved in this. It is uncalled for, and it is being, in my opinion, petty to have to track down Members to try to get them to come running over to try to get some sort of running quorum, and to have a vote. And then, by the way, what if we don't get them? What are we going to do, after all this work?

So, Mr. President, I ask Senator REID, can we move this forward? After all that Senator DASCHLE and I have done, and all that has been done by all the Members, on both sides—including the chairman and ranking member on Judiciary—can't we move this through now?

Mr. REID. The Judiciary Committee has completed their work. That part is out of the way. Would the leader allow me to suggest the absence of a quorum for a brief moment?

Mr. LOTT. Yes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SESSIONS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE EXPENDITURES

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Rules Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 54, submitted by Senators LOTT and DASCHLE, regarding committee expenditures, that the resolution become the pending business, it then be considered agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

Before the Chair rules on this request, I want to announce to the Senate that this resolution contains the entire committee expenditures for all Senate committees to continue funding through February 28, 2003.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 54) was agreed to.

(The text of the resolution is located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Submitted Resolutions.")

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I thank Senator REID and staff on both sides of the aisle for making this possible. This really is an important achievement. We should understand that. It also guarantees our staff members will get their paychecks on time.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I say to the leader, it is my understanding there is

going to be a business meeting of the Rules Committee next week. That was part of the agreement.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, if I may respond to Senator REID's inquiry, that was not part of the unanimous consent agreement, but that is the understanding on both sides of the aisle, that there should be a business meeting of the Rules Committee, and they should discuss matters that are pending and go forward from there.

Yes, that is our understanding. I know the chairman will be accommodating that.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now be in a period for morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RULES OF THE SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that, pursuant to the Standing Rules of the Senate, the rules of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary as approved by the committee today be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follow:

RULES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

I. MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

1. Meetings may be called by the Chairman as he may deem necessary on three days' notice or in the alternative with the consent of the Ranking Minority Member or pursuant to the provision of the Standing Rules of the Senate, as amended.

2. Each witness who is to appear before the Committee or any Subcommittee shall file with the Committee, at least 48 hours in advance of the hearing, a written statement of his or her testimony in as many copies as the Chairman of the Committee or Subcommittee prescribes.

3. On the request of any member, a nomination or bill on the agenda of the Committee will be held over until the next meeting of the Committee or for one week, whichever occurs later.

II. QUORUMS

1. Ten Members shall constitute a quorum of the Committee when reporting a bill or nomination; provided the proxies shall not be counted in making a quorum.

2. For the purpose of taking sworn testimony, a quorum of the Committee and each Subcommittee thereof, now or hereafter appointed, shall consist of one Senator.

III. PROXIES

When a record vote is taken in the Committee on any bill, resolution, amendment, or any other question, a quorum being present, a member who is unable to attend the meeting may submit his vote by proxy, in writing or by telephone, or through personal instructions. A proxy must be specific with respect to the matters it addresses.

IV. BRINGING THE MATTER TO A VOTE

The Chairman shall entertain a non-debatable motion to bring a matter before the